CLAIMS:

1. A method of enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, the method comprising:

obtaining product information from a user of the computing environment; and

5 automatically providing to the user at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the product information comprises a location of the product, and at least one of a product type, a product manufacturer, and a product model number, and wherein the at least one
10 available appointment is based on the location of the product.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the automatically providing comprises selecting the at least one available appointment from at least one possible appointment for at least one service provider.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the automatically providing
15 comprises selecting the at least one available appointment from a plurality of appointments, and wherein the plurality of appointments are associated with a plurality of service providers at a plurality of locations.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the automatically providing comprises determining in real-time the at least one available appointment.

20 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the automatically providing comprises updating in real-time the at least one available appointment as unavailable in the event another user has selected the at least one available appointment.

7.   The method of claim 1, further comprising providing suggested product information to the user for use by the user in providing the product information.

8.   The method of claim 7, wherein the suggested product information comprises at least one of a product type, a product manufacturer, and a product model number.

9.   The method of claim 1, further comprising providing to the user a suggested nature of a problem based on the product information.

10.   The method of claim 1, further comprising obtaining one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

11.   The method of claim 10, further comprising notifying a service provider of the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

12.   The method of claim 11, wherein the service provider is at least one of a factory service provider and an authorized service provider.

13.   The method of claim 10, further comprising setting the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user as unavailable for other users.

14.   The method of claim 1, further comprising validating warranty coverage for the product based on the product information.

15.   The method of claim 1, further comprising obtaining a nature of a problem of the product, and providing do-it-yourself repair information based on the nature of the problem.

16.   The method of claim 1, wherein the obtaining comprises obtaining the product information at a first computing unit from input of the product

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information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network.

17.   The method of claim 16, wherein the communications network is a global computer network.

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18.   The method of claim 1, wherein said service call is for repair of a home appliance.

19.   A method of enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, the method comprising:

obtaining product information at a first computing unit from

10   input of the product information by a user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network; and

automatically providing from the first computing unit to the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information.

20.   The method of claim 19, wherein the product information comprises a location of the product, and at least one of a product type, a product manufacturer, and a product model number, and wherein the at least one available appointment is based on the location of the product.

21.   The method of claim 19, wherein the automatically providing

20   comprises selecting the at least one available appointment from a plurality of appointments, and wherein the plurality of appointments are associated with a plurality of service providers at a plurality of locations.

22.   The method of claim 19, wherein the automatically providing comprises determining in real-time the at least one available appointment.

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23. The method of claim 19, wherein the automatically providing comprises updating in real-time the at least one available appointment as unavailable in the event another user has selected the at least one available appointment.

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24. The method of claim 19, further comprising obtaining a nature of a problem of the product, and providing do-it-yourself repair information based on the nature of the problem.

25. The method of claim 19, further comprising obtaining one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

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26. The method of claim 25, further comprising notifying a service provider of the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

27. The method of claim 25, further comprising setting to one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user as unavailable for other

15 users.

28 A system for enabling scheduling of a service call in a computing environment, said system comprising:

at least one processor adapted to obtain product information from a user of the computing environment; and

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said at least one processor adapted to provide to the user at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein the product information comprises a location of the product, and at least one of a product type, a product

25 manufacturer, and a product model number, and wherein the at least one available appointment is based on the location of the product.

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30.   The system of claim 28, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to select the at least one available appointment from at least one possible appointment for at least one service provider.

31.   The system of claim 28, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to select the at least one available appointment from a plurality of appointments, and wherein the plurality of appointments are associated with a plurality of service providers at a plurality of locations.

32.   The system of claim 28, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to determine in real-time the at least one available appointment.

33.   The system of claim 28, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to update in real-time the at least one available appointment as unavailable in the event another user has selected the at least one available appointment.

34.   The system of claim 28, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to provide suggested product information to the user for use by the user in providing the product information.

35.   The system of claim 34, wherein the suggested product information comprises at least one of a product type, a product manufacturer, and a product model number.

36.   The system of claim 28, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to provide to the user a suggested nature of a problem based on the product information.

37.   The system of claim 28, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to obtain one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

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38.   The system of claim 37, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to notify a service provider of the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

39.   The system of claim 38, wherein the service provider is at least
5   one of a factory service provider and an authorized service provider.

40.   The system of claim 37, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to set the one of the at least one available appointments selected by the user as unavailable for other users.

41.   The system of claim 28, wherein said at least one processor is
10   adapted to validate warranty coverage for the product based on the product information.

42.   The system of claim 28, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to obtain a nature of a problem of the product, and to provide do-it-yourself repair information based on the nature of the problem.

43.   The system of claim 28, wherein said at least one processor is adapted to obtain the product information at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network.

44.   The system of claim 43, wherein the communications network is
20   a global computer network.

45.   The system of claim 28, wherein service call is for repair of a home appliance.

46.   A system for enabling scheduling of a service call for repair of a home appliance in a computing environment, said system comprising:

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means for obtaining product information at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first computing unit via a communications network; and

means for providing from the first computing unit to the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information.

47.   The system of claim 46, wherein the product information comprises a location of the product, and at least one of a product type, a product manufacturer, and a product model number, and wherein the at least one available appointment is based on the location of the product.

48.   The system of claim 46, further comprising means for selecting the at least one available appointment from a plurality of appointments, and wherein the plurality of appointments are associated with a plurality of service providers at a plurality of locations.

49.   The system of claim 46, wherein said means for providing comprises means for determining in real-time the at least one available appointment.

50.   The system of claim 46, wherein said means for providing comprises means for updating in real-time the at least one available appointment as unavailable in the event another user has selected the at least one available appointment.

51.   The system of claim 46, further comprising means for obtaining a nature of a problem of the product, and means for providing do-it-yourself repair information based on the nature of the problem.

52.   The system of claim 46, further comprising means for obtaining one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

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53.   The system of claim 52, further comprising means for notifying a service provider of the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

54.   The system of claim 52, further comprising means for setting the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user as unavailable for other users.

55.   At least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method of enabling scheduling a service call, the method comprising:

obtaining product information from a user; and

automatically providing to the user a plurality of available appointments for scheduling a service call based on the product information.

56.   The at least one program storage device of claim 55, wherein the product information comprises a location of the product, and at least one of a product type, a product manufacturer, and a product model number, and wherein the at least one available appointment is based on the location of the product.

57.   The at least one program storage device of claim 55, wherein the automatically providing comprises selecting the at least one available appointment from a plurality of appointments, and wherein the plurality of appointments are associated with a plurality of service providers at a plurality of locations.

58.   The at least one program storage device of claim 55, wherein the automatically providing comprises determining in real-time the at least one available appointment.

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59.   The at least one program storage device of claim 55, wherein the automatically providing comprises updating in real-time the at least one available appointment as unavailable in the event another user has selected the at least one available appointment.

5   60.   The at least one program storage device of claim 55, further comprising obtaining a nature of a problem of the product, and providing do-it-yourself repair information based on the nature of the problem.

61.   The at least one program storage device of claim 55, further comprising obtaining one of the at least one available appointment selected by 10   the user.

62.   The at least one program storage device of claim 61, further comprising notifying a service provider of the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

63.   The at least one program storage device of claim 61, further comprising setting to one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user as unavailable for other users.

64.   An article of manufacture comprising:

at least one computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing the scheduling of 20   a service call for repair of a home appliance, the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising:

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to obtain product information at a first computing unit from input of the product information by the user at a second computing unit coupled to the first 25   computing unit via a communications network; and

computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide from the first computing unit to the second computing unit at least one available appointment for scheduling a service call based on the product information.

5   65.   The article of manufacture of claim 64, wherein the product information comprises a location of the product, and at least one of a product type, a product manufacturer, and a product model number, and wherein the at least one available appointment is based on the location of the product.

66.   The article of manufacture of claim 64, further comprising computer

10   readable program code means for causing a computer to select the at least one available appointment from a plurality of appointments, and wherein the plurality of appointments are associated with a plurality of service providers at a plurality of locations.

67.   The article of manufacture of claim 64, wherein said computer

15   readable program code means for causing a computer to provide comprises computer readable program code means for causing the computer to determine in real-time the at least one available appointment.

68.   The article of manufacture of claim 64, wherein said computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide comprises

20   computer readable program code means for causing a computer to update in real-time the at least one available appointment as unavailable in the event another user has selected the at least one available appointment.

69.   The article of manufacture of claim 64, further comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to obtain a nature of a

25   problem of the product, and computer readable program code means for causing a computer to provide do-it-yourself repair information based on the nature of the problem.

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70.   The article of manufacture of claim 64, further comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to obtain one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

71.   The article of manufacture of claim 70, further comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to notify a service provider of the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user.

72.   The article of manufacture of claim 70, further comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to set the one of the at least one available appointment selected by the user as unavailable for other users.